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Ethics In Magick

Warren Stott

A local group recently sponsored a seminar on the ethics of magick. I was unable to attend but heard the tapes of the session. Several people on this echo were present and had thoughtful things to say as did the others in attendance. I would like to address a few ideas that came up there and, of course, are significant to all people that work magick.

The question of hexing came up. A rousing chorus ensued saying essentially that many folks there felt their own ethical model does not allow hexing. Initially, I put myself in that group as well. I am not a bad person, I do not intentionally hurt people. After some thought, though, I asked myself this question.

If there is a conceivable ethical situation where I might sucker punch someone, why would there not be such a time to zap them with the same magnitude of magick?

If I punch someone when they have no known defense against me, I am opening the serious potential to harm them. My punch might not hurt them at all, it might surprise them more than hurt them, it might hurt them enough that they get the message I was sending, or it might blind or even kill them. I would not know until after the fact. If I felt justified in punching them, I would probably do it. If they turned and destroyed me, I would have to question my judgment afterwards. Likewise if I blinded them.

Acceptance of the karmic debt was raised as part of this justification cycle. By going ahead and hitting them, I tacitly or implicitly accept the debt. Personal destruction or harming the other guy, it is the same, I accept the debt by my action.

Now where is the ethical question here?

I have often done things, things as simple as saying something in a certain way, that I immediately want to retract. If I hit this fellow, I probably would want to take it back afterward. Is it ethical to act in a fashion that given a little thought you would realize you will regret later?

Magick works in the same way. Presuming the ability to control the magickal zap to the relative intensity of the sucker punch, the results are just as unknown. So you accept the karmic debt, so you zap away.

"Do what ye will" as long as you accept the debt makes it ethical? I don't think so, I think it is in fact unethical to hit or zap the person. But I might do it anyway. It is not really so much a question of ethics as it is a question of responsibility.

No doubt Ollie North thinks that it is unethical to break the law. But he did. No doubt Jim Wright takes the ethics of public office very seriously, but he is now in deep refritos over an ethical dilemma of his own making.

Shit Happens. (For those of you with new babies, Doo Doo Happens.) Ethics is a model of what we would like in the ideal. That ideal we measure ourselves against. We can parade case examples all day to test this conclusion but it is still unethical to harm another. But we do it, both physically and magically.

So, ethical hexing, there is no such thing. I caste a hurt-you-this-much zap on the intended, I have acted unethically. "An ye harm none." No disclaimer or release for special situations is given or implied. She will see me break this, karma will see that the ripples in the pool come back to me. All together, She will see me take responsibility, ethics be damned.

One more time, the chorus swells and this time I am sure that I am part of that group. There is no ethical justification for hexing. Just don't piss me off though, I might be willing to take responsibility for my actions.

Bambi died for us, kicking and screaming in torment!

Warren

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